With a view to remove the difficulties experienced in the proper working of the tank restoration scheme, in the settlement of irrigation disputes, etc., the member representing the Shencotta taluk at the 23rd session of the Assembly had suggested the formation of an Irrigation Board and the appointment of a Special Irrigation Officer. Government had agreed to the proposal. The Irrigation Board suggested by the member should be formed on the lines pointed out by him.

DEWAN'S REPLY:Mr. Kalyanasundaram Pillai. Your representation will be noted and Government will consider the points. On two points I wish to say a few words. One is about the situation of the Demonstration Farm at Puliyara. Your complaint was that it was not situated in the centre of a cultivated locality.

MEMBER: Not in the town.

DEWAN: Yes. But as you yourself said, demonstrations of the use of new kinds of manure and newly introduced agricultural implements are being made in several other centres in the taluk. That is, they are being demonstrated on lands belonging to private owners in other parts of the taluk. Is that right?

MEMBER: Yes, Sir,

DEWAN: So that, these demonstrations are conducted in other centres also. The purpose to be served by demonstration farms is to make experiments in different kinds of soils with different manures and I understand this land on which the farm is now situated, is in every way suitable for that purpose. You have different places containing different kinds of soil giving further facilities for experimenting on manures.

Then, in regard to the formation of Irrigation Boards, this subject is still under the consideration of Government. They have been waiting for legal opinion and expert opinion from the Land Revenue Department and the Agricultural Department and the matter is still under consideration. After getting the reports of these departments, Government will arrive at a decision.

35. Fisheries Department.

MR. L. A. NETTO (*Nominated*): said that the fishing industry helped to feed more than nine-tenths of the population of the State and combined with the fish trade, found work for two lakhs of people. In the State this industry was second only to agriculture. But in some respects it deserved greater attention than agriculture, at the hands of the Government in as much as the agricultural expansion of land was much limited, while the possibilities of the exploitation of aquatic products were almost illimitable. Even with the primitive methods of fishing and its derivative industries in vogue at the present day, the export of fish products worked out annually to the value of Rs. 41 lakhs. Besides, an income of Rs. one lakh and a quarter accrued to the State from customs duty and fishery receipts from backwaters.

The fishing industry had not developed in the State as much as it could have. In the matter of catching, preserving and cultivating fish, the State had to advance much. With a view to improving the fishing industry and trade, an expert with a thorough knowledge of the principles and practical details of the business, should be got down from Japan and should be appointed as Deputy to the Director of Agriculture, for a period of six years. At the conclusion of this period, Fisheries in Travancore should be organised as a separate department and placed under a qualified Travancorean. Three specialists would be required to man the department efficiently, one for each of the three important branches of the industry, *viz.*, fishing, fish-curing and fish culture. There was already one officer in the State service, trained in Japan, who had specialised in fish-curing. Two more students should be deputed to be trained at the Imperial Fisheries Institute in Tokyo, for the other two branches of the industry. These two candidates should be selected from the members of the fishing community in the State.

The member then mentioned the following as urgent requirements for the improvement of the fishing industry in the State :—

1. Salt for curing fish should be issued in Travancore at the same price as in British India, to enable the people engaged in the industry to cure fish properly and efficiently, so as to compete at least on even terms with their brethren in British India.

2. More fish curing yards should be opened, so that every village on the coast might have a yard of its own. In the interests of both the consumers and the producers, the fish curers should be compelled to have their fish cured in the public yards instead of in their insanitary premises, if necessary, even enacting a law for the purpose.

3. Fishery banks should be opened at the Cape, Colachel, Trivandrum, Quilon and Alleppey, to advance money to the fish merchants of the State, on the security of their goods, so as to avoid exploitation by middlemen and foreign merchants.

4. Trade Agents should be appointed at least at Tinnevelly, Colombo and Rangoon to supply timely and correct information and to find better markets and newer lines of business,

DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. Netto. Your representation is full of very valuable opinion and no less valuable suggestions for the improvement of the department. As you said, you were speaking with all the authority of life-long experience of the work of the department. The suggestions that you have made will receive the best consideration of the Government.

As regards the appointment of a Japanese expert, you yourself said that there is already an officer in the department who has had training in fishery in Japan. It is to be hoped that that officer will be able to train up other officers in the department, at least in that branch of work in which he is an expert; and as funds and circumstances permit, Government will think of getting in more experts.

You said that, in the interests of sanitation as well as in the interests of the fisher folk, it would be an advantage if Government pass some law whereby fish curing, except in public fish curing yards, will be prohibited. It is a very good ideal to have before us. But I do not think it is possible to do that in practice for some time to come. Unless you can afford to have fish curing yards along the whole coast line, it will be impossible to promulgate any such prohibitory order. It would be unfair and it would be impossible to carry out. As it is, Government are, year by year, increasing the number of fish curing yards and even this year, there is a provision for opening two new yards. As far as is possib'e, Government will try to work out the same policy; and in course of time, I hope that it will be possible to reach the ideal that you have mentioned. Means are also under the consideration of Government for giving some credit or banking facilities to fisher folk. I cannot say anything more than that, because it has not taken a definite form. All your representations and suggestions will receive Government's consideration.

36. Cottage Industries for Women.

MISS. PENINAH MOSES (*Nominated*) spoke about the urgent necessity of organising cottage industries for the benefit of women. Men and women numbered equally and the popu'ation was increasing by leaps and bounds and the problem of obtaining a living wage for men and women was becoming very acute. The numl er of qualified women was also on the increase, and many among them were unemployed. Hence the question of providing women with cottage industries was one of supreme importance and Government should take it up urgently, to give relief to the unemployed among women. The member suggested the following measures in this behalf :—

1. Encouragement of the cultivation of cotton and the introduction of spinning as a cottage industry.

2. Encouragement of knitting, lace-making and embroidery and needle-work.

3. Encouragement of the manufacture of toys, dolls and envelopes.

4. Introduction of the industry of fibre extraction, such as the fibre from plantain for weaving purposes, from cocoanut tree for coir, from palmyra tree for brushes and from the areca palm for carpets.

5. Encouragement of the manufacture of mats and baskets.

The Government should take practical interest and also render financial help in carrying out the above industries. A qualified woman should be appointed for organising and directing the cottage industries carried on by women. The Directress of Cottage Industries to be appointed should train a number of women of the country to organise classes in important towns, to begin with, where the women and girls should meet and learn the nature of the work to be done by them. These pupils should be supplied with the materials for the work. When